

Senior Wave

A Newsletter of the Maryland Department of Aging

Vol. 4, No. 2 – Spring/Summer 2009

"Healthy, Smart, Green and Growing" Senior Expo



More than 250 seniors, caregivers and family members, as well as elected officials and community leaders, gathered at Behnke Nurseries in Beltsville, Maryland on Friday, March 27th for a Senior Expo that featured Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown's announcement of the State's **"Smart, Green and Growing"** Initiative. The initiative is a partnership of Maryland State Agencies, businesses, schools, and other community organizations to plant 50,000 new trees across Maryland by the end of 2009, and one million trees by 2011. *"In the coming years, we will plant one million trees across the State, which will help us protect the Bay and other natural resources for another generation of grandchildren,"* the Lt. Governor told the participants.

The State has launched a website that will encourage individuals to participate in the initiative by providing coupons and incentives for planting trees this spring. In addition, individuals and businesses can utilize the website to track the benefits, savings and environmental preservation of the trees they have planted. For more information about the State's **"Smart, Green and Growing"** Initiative, visit the website at www.green.maryland.gov.



Secretary of Aging Gloria Lawlah, introduced the **"Pots on the Patio"** program – a concept that will bring fresh produce to the patios of many older Marylanders. *"The goal is to increase the consumption of*

vegetables and fruits in the diets of Maryland's older population and offer creative ways for the growing senior population to remain active and eat healthy, encourage intergenerational activities, and provide access to information on growing fresh fruits and vegetables in portable containers," said Secretary Lawlah. An advantage of **"Pots on the Patio"** is that growing your own vegetables and fruits can save money. Lack of space is not an issue, as the use of an Earthbox™ will only require a small spot on a patio or deck. A variety of crops can be grown in the Earthbox™ such as tomatoes, peppers, spinach, greens, herbs, strawberries—just to name a few. The Earthbox™ is designed to conserve energy and resources, use less water and fertilizer, and there is no need for weeding, hoeing, or digging. For more information about **"Pots on the Patio,"** visit the Maryland Department of Aging's website at www.mdoa.state.md.us, or call 410-767-1100; toll free; 1-800-243-3425.

Highlights of the Expo included vendors and exhibitors in the fields of health and wellness, nutrition, fitness, aging and care-giving, environment, and others who provided valuable information and giveaways for the participants, lunch, an opportunity to win door prizes, a fitness demonstration, and an Earthbox™ demonstration. Each participant was given a Viola or Pansy plant, compliments of Behnke Nurseries.

(Continued on Pg. 2-3)



“Healthy, Smart, Green and Growing” - (Continued from Pg.1)

The *“Healthy, Smart, Green and Growing”* Senior Expo was hosted by Behnke Nurseries, in partnership with the Maryland Department of Aging and the Prince George’s County Department of Family Services. Behnke Nurseries is a family owned business, operating since 1930.

Safeway, DaVita Dialysis Center, and Earthbox™ were major sponsors of the Senior Expo.

For more information about the Earthbox™ Education Program, call 1-800-821-8838.



The Behnke
NURSERIES CO.
Since 1930

11300 Baltimore Avenue
P.O. Box 290
Beltsville, MD 20705-1923

Celebrating Older Marylanders

Gloria Lawlah, Secretary, Maryland Department of Aging



May 1st marks the beginning of a month-long tribute to older Americans. For forty-five years, our nation has paused to honor older Americans during the month of May. During this special month, the ongoing contributions of older citizens are highlighted with a national proclamation issued by the President of the United States and with activities and events planned in communities across the country.

This year's theme, "*Living Today for a Better Tomorrow*," reflects a continued focus on prevention efforts and programs that are helping older adults have better health as they age and avoid the risks of chronic disease and injury. It challenges seniors to set goals that will cause them to think about their health and future long-term care needs. As people live longer, they are remaining physically active and mentally alert. Modern medical interventions, preventive medicine, and a focus on wellness, all play an important part in the changing attitudes about the aging process.



The goal of the Maryland Department of Aging is to promote and encourage healthy lifestyles for seniors by providing information, education and essential programs for physical fitness, healthy diets, disease prevention, mental acuity, and the need for ongoing routine health screenings. During *Older Americans Month*, and beyond, I encourage seniors to learn about and take advantage of the many programs offered through their local Area Agency on Aging, which will ultimately preserve their overall health and independence.

The State of Maryland will join the nation in observance of *Older Americans Month*. To officially kick off the month, Governor Martin O'Malley will issue a proclamation designating the month of May as *Older Marylanders Month* in our state. The proclamation honors Maryland's 900,000 citizens, age 60 and older, for the many contributions they have and continue to make to the progress and development of the State of Maryland.

Older Marylanders Month is an opportune time to re-emphasize Governor O'Malley's commitment to Maryland's older citizens, and to enhance awareness of the many resources available to them. More and more, we hear that the overwhelming preference of our older citizens is to remain in their homes for as long as possible and to be able to make choices as to how and where they live as they age. In keeping this commitment, a priority of Governor O'Malley's and the Maryland Department of Aging is the promotion of preventive programs and services that postpone or prevent the need for costly nursing home care. These programs and services include:

- (1) the **Senior Care Program**, which provides coordinated, community-based, in-home services to seniors with disabilities;
- (2) the **Senior Assisted Living Group Home Subsidy Program**, which provides low- and moderate-income seniors, who might otherwise be in a nursing facility, with access to assisted-living services in small group homes;
- (3) **Home Delivered Meals** for persons who are socially isolated and homebound; (4) the **Congregate Housing Services Program**, which combines shelter, daily meals, and in-home services for frail, older persons; and

(5) the **Medicaid Home and Community Based Waiver Services for Older Adults**, which allows services that are typically covered by Medicaid only in a nursing facility, to be provided to eligible persons in their own homes or an assisted-living facility. All of these programs and services enable older adults to remain in a community setting, even though their age or disability might warrant placement in a nursing home.

Throughout the month of May, each Area Agency on Aging and the local senior centers around the State will be hosting special activities and events in observance of ***Older Americans/Marylanders Month***. For more information about scheduled activities in your area, contact your local Area Agency on Aging.

- On May 7, 2009, centenarians from across the State, along with their relatives, caregivers and friends, will attend the **17th Annual Maryland Centenarians Recognition Luncheon** at Martin's West in Baltimore County. The luncheon, co-sponsored by the Maryland Department of Aging and Social Security Administration, pays tribute to Maryland's golden seniors whose lives continue to inspire us. Secretary Lawlah is the featured speaker for the event.

Today, many more people are reaching the century mark. A surprising fact is that a number of these individuals live independently, which expands our knowledge and expectations of persons with advanced age.

- Recognizing excellence and outstanding contributions to the field of aging and quality of life for seniors is the focus of the **Second Annual Governor's Leadership in Aging Awards**. The ceremony will be held on Tuesday, May 12, 2009 at the Annapolis Senior Activity Center in Annapolis, Maryland. Governor O'Malley will present awards in the following categories:

Trailblazer: An individual, community group, business or organization that has demonstrated leadership in advocacy or developed an innovative program, research, or training for seniors.

Visual or Performing Arts: An individual, 60 years of age or older, or group (whose members are 55 years of age or older) who has demonstrated excellence in the visual or performing arts.

Health and Vitality: An individual, 60 years of age or older, who has demonstrated a commitment to healthy living, and who serves as a role model to others.

This year's *Lifetime Achievement Award* recipient is Dr. Levi Watkins, Jr., Professor and Surgeon at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, Division of Cardiac Surgery and Associate Dean of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

- **"Older Workers Are Good For Business."** In observance of ***Older Marylanders Month***, the Maryland Department of Aging will pay tribute to the State's oldest workers. An announcement of the tribute is forthcoming.

During ***Older Americans/Marylanders Month***, and throughout the year, I urge Maryland citizens of all ages to take advantage of activities and events that celebrate the contributions of older Marylanders.

Department of Aging Mourns The Passing of Rosalie Silber Abrams



In 1983, Governor Harry Hughes appointed Mrs. Abrams as Director of the Maryland Office on Aging, where she served until her retirement in 1996. During her tenure, she endeavored to improve every facet of life for Maryland's older adults, and helped to prepare the government and society for the emergence of a growing aging population.

Mrs. Abrams was elected to the House of Delegates in 1967 at the age of 50. In 1970, she was elected to the State Senate, representing Northwest Baltimore. Senator Abrams served 13 years in the Maryland State Senate, where she became the first woman in Maryland to hold the position of Senate Majority Leader, the first woman Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, and the first woman Chair of the Maryland Democratic Party. As a member of the Maryland General Assembly, Senator Abrams (a title she enjoyed long after she left elective office) earned a reputation as a champion of health care and elderly issues. She is credited with helping to pass legislation focused on patients' rights, mental health care reform, and environmental protection. As a member of the Maryland Commission for Women, she was a relentless advocate who contributed countless hours to achieve equality for women and protecting women's rights.

Senator Abrams leaves behind a legacy of distinguished service and social activism. We extend our deepest sympathies to her family and gratefully acknowledge her many positive contributions to the quality of life in Maryland.



Department's Much Loved Receptionist Remembered



We mourn the passing of Peg Heegan, our former receptionist, who was in her early 90s when she retired from the Maryland Department of Aging. Peg was the much-loved voice of the Department to the many callers and visitors to the Department everyday.

Peg will be remembered for her kindness, consistently cheerful attitude, and her ever-present smile.

We extend our deepest sympathies to her relatives and all who knew and loved her.



If you are currently on the Maryland Department of Aging's email list, you will begin receiving the *Senior Wave* newsletter via email. If you are not on the list, but would like to receive the newsletter via email, visit the Department's website at: [http://www.mdoa.state.md.us/Mail Response Form](http://www.mdoa.state.md.us/Mail%20Response%20Form) and check "Please add me to the Department's Email List."

Highlights...

State of Maryland Launches

“Five Wishes” Initiative

An Outstanding Document for Advance Health Care Planning

Secretary of Aging Gloria Lawlah wants to change the way Marylanders think about and plan for care at the end of life. In order to encourage more people to hold those sensitive discussions with family members and plan for future care, the Maryland Department of Aging has launched a statewide distribution of *Five Wishes*, which is a document that will enable individuals to specify exactly how they wish to be treated in the event they become seriously ill and unable to speak for themselves.

Five Wishes is an advance health directive that will guide you through the process of health care decision-making and assist your family and health care providers in ensuring that your wishes are respected and followed.

The *Five Wishes* booklet is available to the public at no cost. All seniors, their family members and caregivers are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to plan ahead for some of life's most important decisions. *Five Wishes* is available in English, Spanish, Korean and Russian.

If you would like to receive a copy of the booklet, or have questions about any services and programs for seniors and caregivers, you may contact the Maryland Department of Aging at 410-767-1100; toll free: 1-800-243-3425, visit our website at www.mdoa.state.md.us, or contact your local Area Agency on Aging's Senior Information and Assistance Office.

MDOA Participates in Emergency Preparedness Efforts

In an effort to highlight the importance of emergency preparedness and understanding Maryland's emergency structure, State and Local agencies in Maryland worked together during Maryland Preparedness Month this past September to encourage individuals, families and communities to take a pro-active approach to emergency planning.

The Maryland Department of Aging remains committed to ensuring that older adults in Maryland receive information and support in planning and responding to emergency situations, including environmental, medical and other catastrophic events.



MDOA displayed information about emergency planning for older adults and provided handouts at the “Bee Prepared” event hosted by the State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Kalin Williams (l.) and Stephanie Hull (r.) display a Governor's Proclamation presented to the Department for its participation in the event.



MDOA hosted an Emergency Preparedness Training for Area Agency on Aging directors at the Maryland Emergency Management Agency headquarters.

MDOA Staff Continues to Give in a Big Way!

The Maryland Department of Aging (MDOA) closed out the 2008 Maryland Charity Campaign (MCC) by exceeding its campaign goal for the second year in a row. The 61-member staff had 100% participation and raised a total of \$14,190.60 through personal contributions and special fundraising events.

The Maryland Charity Campaign makes it possible for charitable organizations to provide vital services and improve the lives of those in need and the communities we live in.

The 2008 MCC theme was “Go For The Gold: Champions Give in a Winning Way.” MDOA employees are truly “champion givers.”



MDOA held special events to raise funds for the Maryland Charity Campaign. Above (l.): Jeannie Haw, MDOA employee, held a dessert sale. Above (r.): Anita Miller, Department of Assessments and Taxation, was the raffle winner for a Smith Island Cake. Secretary Lawlah presented the winning certificate to Ms. Miller.

Highlights...

"Champion for Seniors"



Mike Lachance, Legislative Liaison for the Maryland Department of Aging, received the United Seniors of Maryland (USM) "*Champion for Seniors*" award in recognition of his 30+ years of service to USM and Maryland seniors.

USM is an umbrella organization of public, non-profit, and private groups interested in promoting and protecting the well-being of older Maryland citizens. USM plays a major role in senior issues by testifying before Legislative committees and through appointments to positions on various important State committees, commissions, and task forces.

Seniors play a vital role in shaping policy that will impact the future of our State for generations to come. If you were not able to attend USM's annual rally this past January, but would like to know what legislation is being proposed, or if you would like to learn more about becoming a member of USM, visit USM's website at <http://unitedsrsofmd.org>, or contact Mike Lachance at 410-767-1100 or mrl@ooa.state.md.us.

2009 Maryland Senior Idol Winner

Congratulations to Joe Pacana, winner of the 2009 Maryland Senior Idol Competition. Joe, a resident of Harford County, competed with twelve other finalists for the coveted title.

Joe migrated from the Philippines to the United States in 1969. A veteran of the Vietnam War, Joe served in the U. S. Army for twelve years. A proud grandfather of four, he is a Medical Technologist by profession, and is employed by Patient First in Bel Air.

The Third Annual Maryland Senior Idol Competition is a statewide event to highlight local senior vocal talent, while raising funds for senior adults recovering from Hurricane Ike. This year's competition was hosted by the Howard County Office on Aging on Friday, January 23rd at Howard Community College.

Joe Pacana
2009 Maryland Senior Idol
Winner



2009 WINTER SENIOR OLYMPICS

This past February 14th, the Garden House in Laurel, Maryland hosted the 2009 Winter Senior Olympics. Shown are hockey players from several teams who participated in this year's Winter Olympics. The event was a great success with a total of 42 senior athletes participating in figure skating, ice hockey, speedskating and curling. The Maryland Senior Olympics Committee encourages seniors to consider participating in the Winter Olympics competition in 2010.

Governor O'Malley Holds "A Conversation With Seniors"

Highlights Services for Seniors and Silver Alert Legislation

Governor O'Malley held a series of town hall meetings around the State to discuss Maryland's economy and public education, and to hear directly from Maryland's families about the economic struggles they are facing.

On February 19, 2009, Governor O'Malley held "A Conversation With Seniors" at Leisure World in Silver Spring, Maryland to talk with Leisure World residents and members of the surrounding community about services the State provides to them. Secretary of Aging Gloria Lawlah and other members of the Governor's Cabinet were also in attendance to answer questions about services available to Maryland's seniors.

"Protecting our State's 900,000 seniors is one of this Administration's top priorities, and we want to share with you some of the things we are doing in your State government to help our seniors find a way forward in these difficult economic times," said Governor O'Malley in his remarks to attendees. The Governor outlined ways that the State of Maryland has protected its seniors, which includes: Legislation signed by Governor O'Malley that closed the Medicare Part D "donut hole" so that no person who relies on this vital prescription drug benefit is ever forced to choose between their groceries and their medicine, and

increased funding for the Medicaid for Older Adults Waiver, which helps Maryland's vulnerable seniors receive long-term care services in a community setting or in their own homes.

Legislation that is co-sponsored by Governor O'Malley and supported by the Maryland Department of Aging include Senate Bill 303 and House Bill 17, which establishes a "Silver Alert Program" designed to create a system that allows for rapid notification of missing adults believed to suffer from a cognitive impairment such as Alzheimer's Disease or some other form of dementia. The bill is also designed to protect missing persons from abuse, neglect, or exploitation and recruit public and commercial television and radio broadcasters, private commercial entities, State and local government entities, and the public to assist in developing and implementing the alert.

The Maryland Department of Aging, the Alzheimer's Association, AARP, and several other agencies and organizations in the aging network applaud the Governor's "Silver Alert" initiative, which addresses an important issue that impacts some 85,000 Marylanders who are living with Alzheimer's Disease and some other form of dementia.

"Doing More With Less -- A Day of Service"

By Executive Order, State employees who are required to take a number of unpaid furlough days must do so by June 30, 2009. The furlough was enacted as a means to reduce the FY '09 budget deficit, and also to avoid potential layoffs of employees. The theme "*Doing More With Less – A Day of Service*" describes Secretary Lawlah and her staff's efforts to spend a day without pay in service to others. On Friday, February 20, 2009, Maryland Department of Aging staff volunteered at Our Daily Bread in Baltimore City.

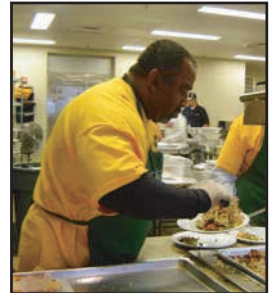
"Ordinarily, we would be at work, so it is the perfect opportunity to visit community and service centers whose focus is addressing the growing basic needs of individuals and families during this downturn."

-Gloria Lawlah, Secretary
Maryland Department of Aging

(Continued on Pg. 10)



The first stop on the service journey was *Our Daily Bread*, Maryland's hot meal program, which serves more than a quarter-million meals to the hungry of Baltimore City each year. John Stewart (fourth from left), Director of the Baltimore City Commission on Aging and Retirement Education, and Salima Siler Marriott, Deputy Mayor of Baltimore City (top right photo), joined Secretary Lawlah and staff in service at *Our Daily Bread*.



The Secretary and members of her staff also visited Kettering Baptist Church in Upper Marlboro, Prince George's County, Maryland, where they participated in the *"Warm Nights Program,"* which operates during the winter months to provide meals, transportation, and overnight shelter to homeless individuals and families at area churches.



Secretary Lawlah is shown with Karen Lynch (center) from the Prince George's County Department of Social Services and Tim Jansen, Director of the Warm Nights Program.



Visitors to the Warm Nights Program at Kettering Baptist Church enjoyed a hearty meal and received a gift bag from the Maryland Department of Aging.



"Ask the Governor" Live on Maryland Public Television

Have a question for Governor O'Malley? What are your concerns and ideas for the future of the State? Governor O'Malley has teamed up with Maryland Public Television (MPT) for a monthly live program, "Ask the Governor," that features direct questions from members of the public. The half-hour program, hosted by MPT's Jeff Salkin, airs the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. You can submit questions directly to MPT for use during the program to directconnection@mpt.org. Questions from callers will also be taken during the program at 1-800-926-0629.



Congress Passes Four-Month Extension for Digital Television Conversion

On January 26, 2009, Congress passed the DTV Delay Act to extend the television conversion date to June 12. It also extends the deadline for households to receive coupons for digital converter boxes until July 31. This will make it possible for consumers holding expired converter box coupons to reapply for new coupons.

For more information on how to apply (or reapply) for discount coupons, locate converter box retailers, or get answers to frequently asked questions, visit: www.DTV2009.gov or call the hotline: 1-888-388-2009.

Social Security Announces Nationwide Launch of Compassionate Allowances

The national rollout of the Social Security Administration's (SSA) Compassionate Allowances Program will help streamline the disability benefits application process so that benefits are quickly provided to those who need them most.

Disability backlogs cause a hardship for patients and their families. The Compassionate Allowances Program provides a way to quickly identify diseases and other medical conditions that qualify under SSA's Listing of Impairments based on minimal objective medical information. SSA launched the program with a total of 50 conditions, with more diseases and conditions to be added over time.

For more information about compassionate allowances or to view a list of the first 50 impairments (25 rare diseases and 25 cancers), visit: www.socialsecurity.gov/compassionateallowances.

Social Security To Distribute One-Time Stimulus Payments

Beginning in May 2009, Social Security will distribute a one-time payment of \$250 to Social Security and Supplemental Security Income beneficiaries nationwide. The payments are

provided under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, signed by President Barack Obama. Eligible individuals will receive a one-page notification of their payment via postal mail in April, and the payments will arrive in May.

A leaflet describing the distribution of the one-time payment in greater detail is available online or in printed form. If you would like a printed copy, email Lauren Hawkins at Lauren.Hawkins@ssa.gov, or call 410-965-8726. To download the leaflet, visit: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pub/10519.pdf>.

Prescription Drug Costs Putting A Dent In Your Wallet?

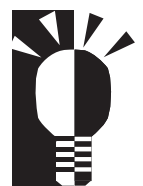
Prescription drug costs can put a big dent in your wallet. But there is good news. If you are a Medicare beneficiary and have limited income and resources, Medicare could pay for 75% or more of your prescription drug costs. In fact, most people can get 95% of their costs covered. It's easy



to find out if you qualify to save. Just contact the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213 or visit their website at www.socialsecurity.gov. Or, you can contact your local Area Agency on Aging, Senior Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP).

Don't delay! Medicare could start paying 75% or more of your prescription drugs costs. (Information provided by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services).

Need Help Paying Electric Bills?



The Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP) provides financial assistance with electric bills. Eligible electric customers may receive help with paying current electric bills or past due electric bills, and receive referrals to services that advise on energy efficiency measures to reduce future electric bills.

For more information, call toll free:

1-800-352-1446 (en Espanol tambien)

TTY callers: 1-800-925-4434

Website: www.dhr.state.md.us/meap

F.Y.I.

Message from the Maryland Commission on Aging

Stuart P. Rosenthal, Chair



Last year, the Maryland Commission on Aging brought together representatives from senior organizations and commissions on aging throughout Maryland to develop a Partnership in Advocacy Initiative. The goals of the partnership are: (1) To better educate Marylanders about the rapid aging of our population and the challenges and opportunities this demographic shift will bring; and (2) To train those interested in these issues on the legislative and policy-making processes and how to influence them in an effective manner.

In 2008, the Commission held advocacy training sessions in Calvert, Queen Anne's and Washington counties—each attracting dozens of residents. Feedback was very positive. This spring, additional training sessions are being scheduled for Baltimore, Howard, Montgomery and Prince George's counties. The Commission intends to continue offering this training throughout the State, so that more Marylanders can better understand and can be better prepared to advocate for the interests of older adults.

For more information about the Partnership in Advocacy Initiative, contact Mike Lachance, Legislative Liaison, Maryland Department of Aging, at mrl@ooa.state.md.us, 410-767-1100 or toll free: 1-800-243-3425.



Would you like to:

- Help people in your community?
- Be part of a dynamic team?

For more information about the Maryland SHIP MATES program, call your local Area Agency on Aging, or the Maryland Department of Aging at 410-767-1100 or toll free: 1-800-243-3425.



LOCAL HELP FOR PEOPLE WITH MEDICARE

- Set your own schedule?
- Enjoy rewarding experiences and personal growth?
- Have an opportunity to meet new people?
- Choose a volunteer position that is right for you?

The *Maryland SHIP MATES* program offers people with different backgrounds, skills and interests the opportunity to volunteer in their community. Volunteer roles include:

Marketer. Responsible for marketing the Senior Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) through local resources.

Administrative. Provides administrative support, including data entry and other clerical duties.

Task Volunteer. Provides support for special, short-term projects.

Educator. Delivers community presentations and related topics or educates Medicare beneficiaries about their options.

Screener. Conducts intake interviews and screens clients for potential programs.

Governor O'Malley Creates Maryland Council for New Americans

With Governor O'Malley's Executive Order, signed December 5, 2008, Maryland joins a select group of states in seeking to enhance the well-being of all residents by addressing critical needs of legal immigrants. The new Council will be divided into work groups addressing four issues: (1) Workforce Development, (2) Citizenship Promotion, (3) Governmental Access, and (4) Financial Services.

Under the new Executive Order, the Maryland Office for New Americans (MONA) becomes the Maryland Office for Refugees and Asylees (MORA). The new name more accurately reflects MORA's mandate to administer the federally funded Refugee Resettlement Program.

For more information, contact:

MORA at 410-767-7514, or
the Maryland Department of
Aging at 410-767-1100 or
toll free: 1-800-243-3425.

Older Americans and HIV/AIDS

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome – a late stage of HIV infection), and it is affecting older Americans. In 2006, people over the age of 50 accounted for:

- **15 percent** of new HIV/AIDS diagnoses;
- **24 percent** of people living with HIV/AIDS; and
- **35 percent** of all deaths of people with AIDS.



Many people mistakenly assume that older Americans are not sexually active and, therefore, not at risk for HIV infection. **This is not the case.** A 2007 national survey of Americans, age 57 to 85, found that the majority of older Americans are sexually active. However, older Americans do not always realize that they may be a risk for HIV infection. Older people may also mistake the early symptoms of AIDS for the aches and pains of normal aging and neglect to be tested for HIV, or they may feel ashamed or afraid of being tested. Many older adults visit the doctor on a routine basis, but they often do not bring up the subject of sex or HIV testing.

The U. S. Department of Health and Human Services encourages older Americans to “*Take control of your health and your life and get tested for HIV.*” For more information about HIV/AIDS, talk with your doctor or visit www.aids.gov.

Maryland Receives Seniors Medicare Patrol Program Grant

The Maryland Department of Aging has been awarded a \$200,000 two-year grant from the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging, to expand the current Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) program. SMP recruits and trains volunteers to provide education to seniors that will help them identify and prevent health care fraud and abuse. Educational seminars are held at senior housing complexes, churches, senior centers, and other community settings. Seminars cover topics such as how to review Medicare Summary Notices to make sure services were provided and how to spot billing errors. The Department’s goal is to partner with Area Agencies on Aging and the Maryland Access Point program to reach seniors living in rural areas of the State and tribal elders.

Persons interested in volunteering for the SMP program should contact their local Area Agency on Aging or call the Maryland Department of Aging at 410-767-11 or toll free: 1-800-243-3425.

The National Diabetes Education Program: Your Source for Free Diabetes Information

Looking for free diabetes information that’s easy to get, scientifically based, written in plain language, and from a source you can trust? All it takes is one phone call or one click to the *National Diabetes Education Program* (NDEP) to obtain the free diabetes information you need. NDEP makes it easy to get free information on living with diabetes, tips to prevent or delay Type 2 diabetes, and how to help loved ones manage the disease.



Just call **1-888-693-NDEP** or click on www.YourDiabetesInfo.org.

NDEP is a partnership of the National Institute of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and more than 200 public/private partners.

“It’s Too Darn Hot”—

Planning for Excessive Heat Events

Information for Older Adults and Family Caregivers



Did you know that each year more people die from “excessive heat events” than from hurricanes, lightning, tornadoes, floods, and earthquakes combined? Anyone can be adversely affected by excessive heat, but older adults are particularly vulnerable.

Excessive heat events are prolonged periods when temperatures reach 10 degrees Fahrenheit or more above the average high temperature for a region. During an average summer, approximately 1,500 people die from excessive heat events in the United States. In most cases, victims are 65 years of age or older.

WHO IS AT RISK? For the growing number of aging Americans, the body’s cooling mechanisms may become impaired. Living alone or being confined to a bed and unable to care for one’s self further increase risk. Existing health conditions such as chronic illness, mental impairment, and obesity can also heighten an individual’s vulnerability. Persons taking certain medications are likewise susceptible.

How Can I Reduce Exposure To Excessive Heat?

The best defense against excessive heat is prevention. Air-conditioning is one of best protective factors against heat-related illness and death. Even a few hours a day in air conditioning can greatly reduce the risk. Electric fans may provide some comfort, but when temperatures are in the high 90s, fans do not prevent heat-related illness.

During excessive heat events, the following prevention strategies can save lives:

- Visit air-conditioned buildings in your community if your home is not air-conditioned. These may include senior centers, movie theatres, libraries, shopping malls, or designated “cooling centers.”
- Take a cool shower or bath.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Don’t wait until you are thirsty to drink fluids. If a doctor limits

your fluid intake, make sure to ask how much to drink when it’s hot. Avoid beverages containing caffeine, alcohol, or large amounts of sugar. These drinks cause dehydration.

- Ask your doctor or other health care provider if the medications you take could increase your susceptibility to heat-related illness.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, and loose-fitting clothing.
- Visit at-risk individuals at least twice a day. Watch for signs of heat-related illness such as hot, dry skin, confusion, hallucinations, and aggression.
- Call 9-1-1 if medical attention is needed.

This information provided by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA Aging Initiative is working to protect the environmental health of older adults through the coordination of research, prevention strategies, and public education. For more information or to join the listserve, visit: www.epa.gov/aging.



Good News. . .

Good News is a series highlighting local Area Agencies on Aging and Aging Network Organizations

Allegany County Human Resources Development Commission, Inc.

Congratulations to the Cumberland Senior Center, winner of the 2008 *National Council on Aging/CVS Prescription for Better Health State Competition*. Cumberland won for its SAPPHIRE Evidence Based Program. SAPPHIRE stands for *Stability Assessment Program Providing Health by Integrating Resources and Education*. The program is aimed at older adults who are at risk of falls by incorporating a series of mini workshops and health screenings. The mini workshops were conducted by local health care agencies and businesses free of charge. Cumberland Senior Center won \$500, and is automatically entered into the running for the 2009 national award.

Baltimore County Department of Aging

Congratulations to Arnold Eppel, Director of the Baltimore County Department of Aging (BCDA) on receiving the Maryland Senior Olympics *Robert G. Ziegler Service Award* in recognition of his past volunteer service as Treasurer of the Maryland Senior Olympics Committee, and for BCDA's assistance with the Maryland Senior Olympics games.

Charles County Aging and Community Services

Congratulations and best wishes to Joan Wright who retired as Manager of the Nanjemoy Senior Center this past December.

Montgomery County Area Agency on Aging

Congratulations and best wishes to Elizabeth Boehner on her retirement as Director of the Montgomery

County Area Agency on Aging. For the past 20 years, Ms. Boehner has made countless contributions to promote the health, safety, and quality of life for Montgomery County seniors and their caregivers.

Upper Shore Aging, Inc.

Congratulations and best wishes to Carl Burke, Director of Upper Shore Aging, Inc. As of March 9, 2009, Mr. Burke has accepted a position with a local foundation. Mr. Burke was the Director of Upper Shore Aging, Inc. since March 1997, and worked tirelessly to improve the quality of life of Maryland seniors, both as AAA Director and as President of the Maryland Association of Area Agencies on Aging.

Washington County Commission on Aging, Inc. (WCCoA)

WCCoA is among ten Benefits Enrollment Centers (BECs) that will receive funding from the National Council on Aging this year. Using web-based tools, the BECs will help seniors in need and people with disabilities find and enroll in benefits programs.

Maryland Association of Senior Centers (MASC)

MASC has been named the *State Association of the Year* by the National Institute of Senior Centers for the hard work and dedication its board and members do to provide exceptional service to Maryland's senior centers. This is the second time MASC has won the award. Jill Hall, MASC President, received the award and \$1,000 cash prize on behalf of MASC at the NCOA/ASA Conference in Las Vegas in March.

"Smart, Green & Growing"

A E J Y L C R C H E N O L
D V A T X D E H T C E T A
V Q F Z S O S E W O E V N
W H U S E O O S O L R K D
G L I E E W U A R O G K S
Y E Y L R G R P G G O B C
K N Z S T O C E R Y G C A
E M F N T D E A E A J I P
E I E E N I S K T G H I E
N O I T A V R E S N O C S
P N S Q L C X B Y E U J E
J J F F P S C A O X M Z M
T A T S Y A B Y T O L I O

BAYSTAT
DOGWOOD
LANDSCAPES

CHESAPEAKE BAY
ECOLOGY
OYSTER GROWTH

CONSERVATION
GO GREEN
PLANT TREES
RESOURCES

Puzzle Solution at www.mdoa.state.md.us

Senior Wave is published by the
Maryland Department of Aging.

Martin O'Malley, Governor
Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor
Gloria Lawlah, Secretary

Editor
Toni L. Price
*Director of Public Affairs &
Outreach*
410-767-4170
tlp@ooa.state.md.us

Local: 410-767-1100
Toll Free: 1-800-243-3425
TTY users call via Maryland Relay
Website:
www.mdoa.state.md.us



301 W. Preston Street
Suite 1007
Baltimore, MD 21201

PRSRT STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #7662
Baltimore, MD